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ACTION AF-00

INFO	LOG-00	AID-00	A-00	CA-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DODE-00
	DS-00	EAP-00	EB-00	EUR-00	E-00	UTED-00	VCI-00
	FDRE-01	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	L-00
	M-00	VCIE-00	NEA-00	NSAE-00	ISN-00	NSCE-00	OIC-00
	OMB-00	NIMA-00	EPAU-00	PA-00	MCC-00	PM-00	GIWI-00
	PRS-00	P-00	ISNE-00	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00
	TRSE-00	FMP-00	EPAE-00	IIP-00	SCRS-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	PRM-00	DRL-00	G-00	NFAT-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/002W

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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2715
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY BAMAKO
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
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UNCLAS NDJAMENA 001757

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/C, AF/EPS, EB AND PRM;
USAID/W FOR DCHA/AA MHESS; DAA WGARVELINK; DAA LROGERS;
DCHA/OFDA GGOTTLEB; MMARX; IMACNAIRN; DLILLIE; PWANEK;
ESIMOES; MLUTZ;
DCHA/FFP JDWORKEN
ACCRA FOR USAID/WARP
BRUSSELS FOR USEU PLERNER
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH
KHARTOUM FOR MBEERS; KFARNSWORTH
NAIROBI FOR USAID/OFDA JMYER AND USAID/RFFPO NESTES
DAKAR FOR RFFPO
LIBREVILLE FOR REO, M. CASSETTA
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USUN FOR TMALY

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TAGS: [EAID](#) [SOCI](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [CD](#) [USAID](#)

SUBJECT: USAID/OFDA PROGRAMMING IN EASTERN CHAD

REF: A) NDJAMENA 01741, B) NDJAMENA 01708

SUMMARY

1. Approximately 200,000 Sudanese refugees currently live in reasonable but delicate harmony with their Chadian hosts in an arid and undeveloped environment. Potential problems revolve around use of natural resources, jealousy and political developments in Sudan and Chad. UNHCR and its partners are doing a good job of reaching out to the host population, but expectations are high. Coordination of efforts on behalf of the local population needs to be improved. Security is good, especially the lack of banditry, for the moment, but could deteriorate rapidly. The USG should continue to support efforts on behalf of refugee and host populations, and to closely monitor developments.

2. A USG team consisting of USAID/OFDA Nairobi-based Principal Regional Advisor Jack Myer and Embassy Ndjamena Assistance Officer Leslie McBride traveled in areas of eastern Chad affected by the presence of Sudanese refugees November 17-25. The two objectives of the trip were to assess relations between the refugees and the local Chadian population and to monitor USAID/OFDA-funded projects in the area. This cable reports on the first objective. End Summary.

A ROAD TRIP THROUGH EASTERN CHAD

3. Myer and McBride first flew to Bahai near the Chad/Sudan border in the northern (BET) region and then drove to Abeche (capital of Ouaddai region) via Tine, Iriba and Guereda. Road travel was facilitated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and air travel by UNHCR and the U.N. World Food Program

(WFP).

14. The entire area is under U.N. security phase-three, and vehicle convoy, radio-check and day-time travel protocols were observed. No security incidents occurred during the trip and there was minimal local security presence.

15. The team met with local authorities including the governors of Wadi Firah and Ouaddai regions, prefects of Dar Tama and Dar Sila departments, the sub-prefect of Bahai and the delegate of the Ministry of Plan and Economic Cooperation for Ouaddai and Wadi Firah regions. It also met the traditional Sultans of Bahai (President Deby's brother), Iriba (Dar Zaghawa), Guereda (Dar Tama) and Goz Beida (Dar Sila), and a number of chefs de canton and village chiefs. In each stop it was hosted and briefed by UNHCR officials and NGO representatives, and spoke with refugees and local people.

200,000 Refugees, Few Chadians, No Development

16. Factors affecting the situation and thus relations between the refugees and local people include the weather, the environment, jealousy over assistance

levels, access to basic services, ethnic rivalry, traditional rustling, poverty, and external factors including the political situation in Chad, the evolution of the conflict in Darfur, use of camps by Darfur rebels, and Chadian rebel activity.

17. The eastern part of Chad where Sudanese victims of the conflict in Darfur have taken refuge is mostly arid and semi-arid, experiencing an average of between 200 and 600 mm of rain per year. The local people struggle to survive through animal husbandry and occasional rain-fed agriculture in good years, supplemented in some areas by recessionary agriculture and market gardens. Although they are ethnically related in many cases, the number of ethnic groups and distribution of refugees means that some refugees are located in areas of groups not related to them.

18. The 200,000 refugees are located in 12 camps scattered along the border area. From north to south the environment is progressively less arid, but is subject to a single rainy season each year and many months of increasing dryness. The 2005 rains were the best in five, 15 or 70 years depending on where and who was asked. Regardless, local people could be seen in all areas harvesting the rain-fed millet they plant each year in hopes of getting enough, properly distributed rain to produce a crop.

19. The camps are now for the most part fully developed. In the six camps visited no lines for water were observed, and most refugees had built mud walls and had vegetable gardens around their huts, signs that there is enough water. WFP had adequate warehouses, community services are developed, NGOs are managing health facilities and the unarmed Chadian gendarme force in the camp seemed respected by the refugees, and had minimal security around their camps.

110. Friction between the refugees and local population has reduced as the refugees access what they need in the camps, with the exception of firewood. In fact, water and health services in the camps have been extended to local people in many cases.

111. Compared to services available in the camps, the villages in the area are severely undeveloped. Few have health facilities or schools, and most depend on shallow wells dug in dry riverbeds (wadis) or distant boreholes for their water needs. In the rainy season most rely on surface water. Respiratory diseases in the dry season and water-borne diseases in the rainy season, as well as malaria are the principal health problems reported in the area. Late in the dry season malnutrition is usually a problem.

112. Relations between the refugee and local communities in the areas visited were reported by most local interlocutors as currently good and certainly appeared so to the USG team. However, there have been tensions in the past and the potential for problems still exists. For example, the UNHCR Head of Field Office (HOFO) in Iriba said that the mere rumor of a refugee child being killed by a car in a nearby village caused a refugee mob to attempt to lynch villagers. Other incidents include cattle rustling and fights over water sources.

13. Refugee use of scarce natural resources, especially firewood, remains a source of tension. Refugee women go out to collect firewood, competing in the harsh environment with local people, angry that their precious natural resource is being consumed. Although UNHCR has thought about substituting kerosene stoves, it does not have the funds to provide the 40,000 or so refugee families with a stove and steady fuel supply. It has started distributing a German made, efficient wood stove (the SAVE 80 model), but again lacks the resources to provide them for all the refugees, who will still require wood in any case. Most camps access water from boreholes, and the local population is acutely aware of the risk that the water table will drop as a result.

14. As services for refugees have improved, the risk of tension related to jealousy on the part of unassisted host populations has increased. To address this, the humanitarian community is beginning to help provide some of the needs of the local population.

The five percent solution

15. Throughout the region, the awareness on the part of the international humanitarian community of the need to take local needs into account struck the team as quite high. Not only do the humanitarian organizations worry about this problem, but UNHCR has gone to the extent of formally dedicating five percent of its budget to projects that solely benefit the local population. This is in addition to a policy of allowing local people to obtain water and health services in the camps, and hiring and procuring locally where possible.

16. Unfortunately, the laborious bureaucracy involving Chadian authorities at various levels has slowed the approval process for the small-scale, quick-impact projects UNHCR is supporting. The UNHCR Representative in Chad said she doubts the agency will be able to spend the budget it has set aside for these activities for 2005 as a result. UNHCR's 2006 budget will most likely be smaller than 2005, so the five percent will also shrink, she added.

17. Development priorities as articulated by local authorities include water, improved agriculture, road infrastructure, health and education. In most villages visited this list was topped by water and health.

COORDINATION

18. An emerging issue for the humanitarian and development community working on behalf of local populations in eastern Chad is coordination. When the "five percent" program was first proposed, various levels of government from the prefecture to the capital, competed to have control of the process. UNHCR firmly resisted requests from the GOC to turn the funds over to it, and has settled on a system whereby local UNHCR offices and prefects or sub-prefects pre-approve projects. Final approval is then provided by the governors of the regions involved, with technical input from the delegates of concerned technical ministries.

19. This system is cumbersome and results in substantial delays. A further complication is that the increasing efforts of NGOs on behalf of local populations using other funding are not subject to this coordination. At present, each technical ministry has a delegate in Abeche, charged with coordinating. But the delegate of the Ministry of Planning and Economy says that he should also be involved, and currently is not. He also complained of the lack of resources available to the delegations, and occasional NGO "end-runs" around the regional delegations directly to prefectural or lower level authorities for coordination or approval.

20. On the other hand, the delegate and NGOs both admit, the technical coordination is so far adequate, and bypassing the regional and national authorities removes many of the delays haunting UNHCR.

21. This issue has been taken up by the U.N. country team in Ndjamena, the UNHCR Representative told the USG team. The U.N. has been discussing an enhanced coordination role for the U.N. in supporting non-refugee activities. Either the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or the U.N. Development Program could take on some of this role. Notably, neither has a field presence. Interlocutors in Abeche, including the delegate for the Ministry of Plan and Economy, said they

would welcome such a development.

Security

122. The security situation in eastern Chad requires the closest of monitoring. At the moment, the entire area is under U.N. phase three, which makes it relatively easy to implement programs with modest procedures. However, latent tensions between refugees and Chadians, political developments in Chad and the ongoing war in Darfur could all easily tip the balance.

123. Fighting in Darfur shows no signs of decreasing, and rebel movements are split. It is commonly believed that rebels travel back and forth to the camps for "R and R", and that there are arms in some camps. If this group decided to use them in Chad, for political or banditry purposes, security could deteriorate. Recent defections from the Chadian army in the area also worry aid workers. If the defectors numbers grow, they and Chadian rebels thought to be operating in western Darfur could cause insecurity in the area.

124. Hitherto there has been little banditry or targeting of relief workers. The NGO International Medical Corps (IMC) had one vehicle stolen November 10, the only such incident directly affecting the humanitarian community. The vehicle was recovered in Darfur and returned by the Chadian army. More recently, another vehicle belonging to the GOC was also stolen from this region. However, with the number of guns thought to be in the region, and the attractiveness of NGO assets especially the dozens of new Toyota four-wheel drive vehicles and communications equipment to bandits and rebels alike, the risk is there.

125. The "five percent" and other efforts on behalf of the Chadian population is having a good impact in giving the local population an interest in ensuring assistance organizations can do their work. If priorities or budgets shift away from the locals, an increase in banditry or other security problems is likely.

126. UNHCR is keenly aware of the security risks in the area and, aside from ensuring the safety of its staff, facilities and operations through MOSS compliance, has conducted several security assessments and will continue to do so.

Observations

127. Throughout the trip, the USG team observed what appeared to be close and collaborative relations between NGOs and the U.N. agencies working in eastern Chad, especially UNHCR. A visitor gets a strong sense of the unity of purpose amongst the organizations. The result is that the international humanitarian community is seen as one by refugees and Chadians alike, facilitating the task of assisting both. This is due, the USG team believes, to the strong leadership provided by UNHCR in the area. It is also attributable to several of the NGOs providing assistance to both refugee and local populations.

128. The positive attitude towards local Chadian development problems has created a conceptual link between the refugee presence and development efforts, which will help ensure that organizations involved in development receive a good welcome locally. The U.N. has decided to beef up its presence in the east in a big way, with the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNICEF and the U.N. Population Fund opening permanent offices in Abeche for the first time, joining WFP which has been in the region for 15 years and UNHCR. The challenge of finding funds for development activities will continue, but their presence in the region may help.

129. The UNHCR and associated operations have been relatively well funded to date. However, budget cuts will be inevitable (indeed, NGOs were informed at a meeting in Abeche November 24 that UNHCR's budget will be significantly reduced for 2006) and the tension that will bring within organizations, among organizations, and with beneficiaries and authorities will need to be carefully managed. The operation is probably at a peak currently, in terms of good will and positive image.

130. Expectations are high amongst both populations that assistance will continue to be provided. Regardless of

the evolution of budgets, expectations will have to be managed.

¶31. The USG team was struck by the high quality of international and local staff engaged by the humanitarian organizations, and by the high number of Africans serving as international staff. Individuals from numerous countries hit by previous humanitarian crises have managed to parlay their experience as local staff at home into international careers. This fact is not lost on the Chadians they deal with, and has facilitated the work of their organizations.

¶32. One aspect of the refugee impact on eastern Chad is the influence refugees have on the local people. In several of the USG team's stops, they were told that the Sudanese use more advanced arid-land agricultural techniques which Chadian farmers are beginning to mimic. Another example is that Sudanese Arabic words and expressions are finding their way into Chadian Arabic usage.

CONCLUSION

¶33. Eastern Chad has, with a few notable exceptions, been neglected for a long time by development actors, including the GOC. The arrival of over 200,000 refugees from the Darfur region of Sudan to this delicate arid environment has brought local development problems into focus. But it has also created jealousy and tension between the local Chadian population and the refugees.

¶34. The challenge for the GOC and the international community is to find the resources to not only take care of the refugees, but to begin the process of developing this neglected area. If they fail, the delicate balance prevailing between the two groups may be upset. The USG should continue supporting programs on behalf of refugees and the local population, and closely monitor the situation by traveling to the area on a regular basis.

¶35. Minimize Considered.
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